TOWN
&
OUNTRY
HURCH

In This Issue

Ruth Elizabeth Murphy is a member of staff of the International Council of igious Education, which is one of the ncies constituting the Committee on wn and Country. She tells in full, pages 4, the story of a *rural* laboratory train- school.

lbert C. Bartholomew, who writes on il stewardship," page 4, is minister of Pleasantville Evangelical and Reformed urch, Eureka, Pa. His address is Chal- t, Pa.

. W. Moomaw, see page 5, first had a eer as a rural missionary in India where was interested in churches and credit ions. One of the rural leaders of the urch of the Brethren, he has also lately ved Agricultural Missions.

C. M. Hanna, page 7, is minister of a mber of country churches, manager of number of farms and teacher in one in- ution, the Louisville Theological Sem- ry.

Harry C. Munro, who writes of "Your angelistic Potential," is on the staff of the ternational Council of Religious Educa- n. See page 9.

W. H. Thompson who, on page 11, writes recruiting is on the staff of the Ohio uncil of Churches.

H. D. Loughhead, see page 12, directs the ral in-service training program of the rthern Baptists at Green Lake, Wiscon- .

V. A. Edwards, see page 13, directs the ral church program of the National Bap- t Convention, Inc.

No. 40
January, 1948

1948

A Laboratory Training School in Action

RUTH ELIZABETH MURPHY

• It was a cold day when three strangers visited the four open country church buildings of Howard Township, six miles from Kokomo, Indiana. The warmth of the big stove in the home of one of the ministers was most welcome. This was matched with the welcome of the local committee at the fine pot-luck supper which followed.

The local committee was made up of ministers, Sunday School superintendents and the Howard Township church committee for children's work. The churches represented were the Rich Valley Christian Church, the Zion Evangelical United Brethren Church, the Hillsdale Evangelical United Brethren Church, and the Methodist Church. The three strangers had come on a significant errand.

An Experiment

Howard Township churches had invited the Town and Country Committee to hold its national experimental Rural Laboratory Training School there. Rev. Edwin L. Becker, chairman of this committee, had brought two others to help with the plans. They were Ruth Elizabeth Murphy, of the staff of the International Council of Religious Education, who was to direct the laboratory school, and Mrs. Herald A. Demaree, a farmer's wife and a trained children's worker who was to be one of the teachers.

Some of the local committee asked: "What is a laboratory training school?" It is a vacation church school (sometimes called daily vacation Bible school) for boys and girls. For the student teachers it is a place to observe, and later try their hands at practice teaching. The teachers are learning how to teach in Sunday School.

It is an opportunity for the staff to demonstrate how to teach Christianity to boys and girls; to supervise practice teaching of the student teachers; and then to dismiss the boys and girls and guide the student teachers in a discussion of the values of the work done. In addition, standard Leadership Education Courses and credits are given.

For Open-Country Church

How had the churches of Howard Township come to be interested in such a project? One minister's wife had attended a laboratory school of her own denomination, and was helped so much that she persuaded two other farmers' wives in her church to attend the next year. But one of them said to Mrs. Demaree, who was an instructor in that denominational laboratory school, "This is fine for Sunday School teachers in *towns,* but it does not help me because I have to work in a one-room country church. We can't do all this with our limitations."

This led to a visit to the Rich Valley Christian Church in Howard Township. Mrs. Demaree advised some rearrangements. The church leaders were willing to make changes, and the basement of that church was equipped with large heavy screens and furniture to fit the boys and girls. (It proved to be well arranged for the experimental laboratory training school.) Meantime, some other teachers had attended laboratory school. They were persuaded that Howard Township churches would be greatly helped if they could have a laboratory school there. The local committee and its chairman, Mrs. Charles W. Coan, worked under difficult circumstances and at real sacrifice to make all the necessary local arrangements. They rendered excellent service throughout the whole project.

Some Questions

These were some of the problems and questions raised at that first January meeting: How could they entertain the staff and student teachers? Which church building would best serve the purpose of demonstrating good work in a small church? How could lunches be served? Where could transportation in private cars be secured? How

HOLBROOK LIBRARY
PACIFIC SCHOOL
OF RELIGION

Rev. J. Allan Ranck in front of the Rich Valley Christian Church

many boys and girls and local student teachers could come to the laboratory school and still allow room for visiting student teachers? What courses should be taught? And so forth.

The biggest problem was the date. When would the farmers' wives be the least busy? When would the rooms be vacant which were often used for farm helpers but were needed for visiting teachers? Finally, May 11 to 17 was chosen as a somewhat slack period on the farms for farmers' wives. The weather changed the estimate of the farm activities of that date, but the local group was able to meet all arrangements requested plus many other kindnesses to the visitors.

The first thought was to have a class for older boys and girls and a class for younger children. But the local group wanted four departments. Their Sunday and Vacation Church Schools were all departmentally graded. They said, "Why should we take a step backward?"

The Juniors play a game

Many Cooperators

Various agencies were invited to cooperate by sending staff teachers. This was greatly appreciated. The following staff rendered splendid service: Mrs. H. A. Cassidy of Wellington, Ohio, served in the Kindergarten department. She was sent by the Methodist Board of Education; Miss Harriett Hardy, State Director of Children's Work, Disciples of Christ, Kentucky, served in the Primary department; Mrs. Herald Demaree of Franklin, Indiana, served in the Junior department. She was sent by the Indiana Disciples of Christ; Rev. J. Allan Ranck, Youth Director of the Evangelical United Brethren Church, served in the Junior High department.

The following schedule for the student teachers was used:

Sunday

4:00 P.M.—Evening—Staff meeting and preparation
Student teachers check into homes.

Monday through Friday

Breakfast in the homes
Travel to Rich Valley Christian Church
8:45-11:15 Vacation Church School in four departments
11:25-12:15 Departmental evaluation periods
12:30-1:30 Lunch at the Church—served by women's societies of three churches
1:30-2:00 Preparation for the next day
2:00-2:50 Departmental Leadership Education Courses
3:00-3:30 Worship services or assembly of staff and student teachers
3:30-4:30 General Leadership Education Course—"The Christian Education Program in Rural Churches for Boys and Girls."
4:30 Staff meeting
6:30 Supper in homes and evening for study

Saturday morning

9:00-9:50 Departmental Leadership Education classes
10:00-11:00 General Leadership Education class.

Rich Valley Christian Church
Howard Township, Indiana

11:00-11:20 Closing assembly and presentation of credit cards.
11:20-12:15 Clean and pack supplies
12:30 Lunch at the church

Soft, Sweet Voices

The schedules for the departments had to be arranged in such a way that the one piano in the basement, the one outside toilet, and the one pump in the kitchen in the basement could be used in turn by various groups without loss of time or confusion. The time schedules proved to be satisfactory. The primaries and beginners sang without the piano many times. Their soft sweet voices did not interfere with the work of the other departments so much as the use of the piano would have interfered.

The Junior High department met upstairs at one side of the church

Some of the student teachers

oper. The men of the church oved some pews to make space for ork tables. Large curtains made e corner more private. The three ner departments met in the base- ent. For division of space, see the art, "Basement Plan at Rich Val- y Christian Church."

dvantages, Disadvantages

Out of the discussions and papers "Christian Education in a Small ural Church" came several inter- ting observations. Some disad- ntages listed were: limitations of ace, pupils, teachers, and finances; ise and much moving of equip- ent to meet the various needs; all es having to worship together ake it difficult for children to un- rstand; and loneliness of persons some farms make for unsocial be- avior.

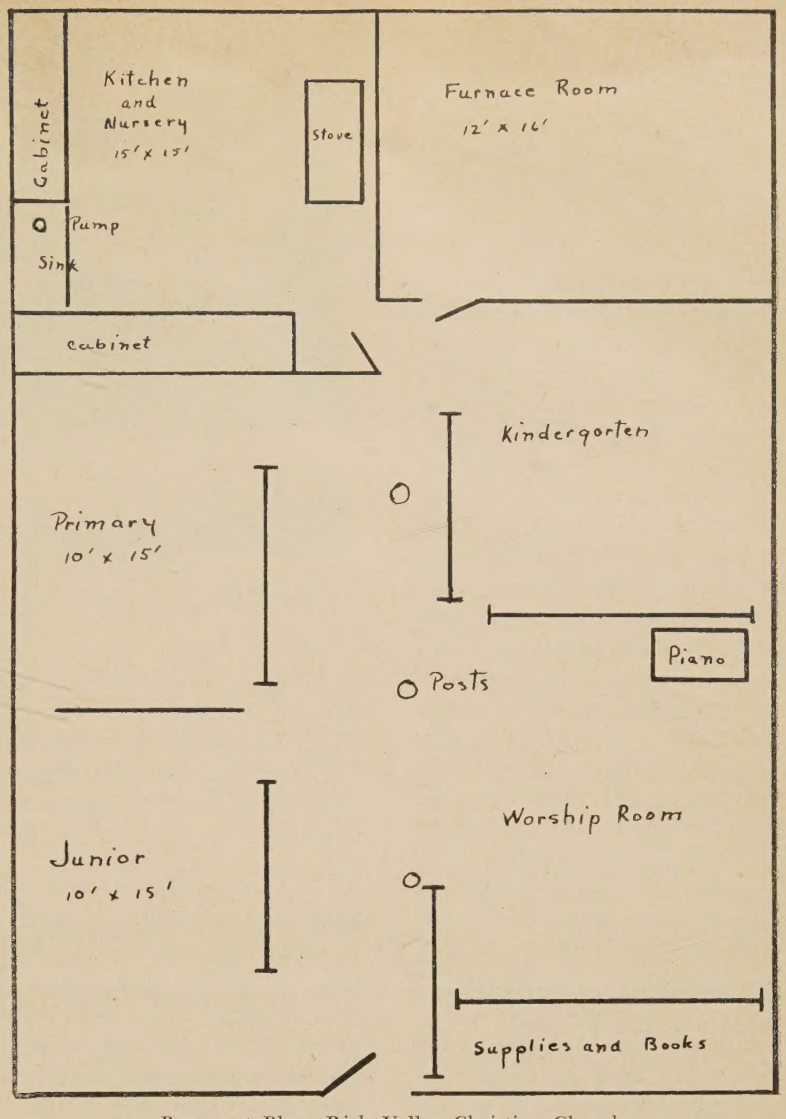
But some striking advantages were sted also: fewer teachers needed; very one feels needed; common in- rests avoid sharp group distinc- ons; friendly atmosphere of church nd community; cooperation often arned through adjustments to owded conditions; smaller groups Sunday School and Youth Fellow- ip make them easier to handle; in- ividuals receive more personal at- ntion; greater opportunity to fol- w up class work; leaders know the milies; children have opportunity r and experience in wholesome rm work; groups can go out-of- oors safely; everyone is near grow- g things (plants and animals) and herefore can more easily feel near God in the beauty of His world; nd recreation has to do with natu- l things—swimming, fishing and errying.

Quotations

The following quotations illus- rate further some of the thinking:

"The planning should have a ong-term vision, recognizing that Christian growth and arousing of in- erest to the point of conviction is low. This applies to both the local hurch and area leadership."

"Probably no one-room church is o small that two or three separate paces could not be provided where



Basement Plan: Rich Valley Christian Church

creative teaching could be possible with as many as ten children in each space. The problem is more often one of training the children's leaders, church board, and congregation to the possibilities and necessity of providing adequately for children."

"Where worship must be in one room, educate the adult membership to recognize that probably no function which the church has is more important than that of nurturing its children and youth in Christian growth. Therefore, the worship service must be planned to meet their needs and can no longer speak only to adults."

The Junior children dramatized (very simply) a story from the life of Paul. They wanted to invite the families and friends to see it. That meant an evening meeting because the farmers were plowing. A Friday evening meeting was planned after the weather proved favorable for a good attendance.

Open House

Each department prepared its space for "Open House" for families and friends, and each planned a part of the sharing program—except the Kindergarten. They stayed in their space downstairs. The Primaries had everyone join in singing their special song. The Juniors gave their play. The Junior Highs had charge of the worship service, including the offering. The offering was a service project suggested by the Jun-

ior Highs. One of the student teachers is a missionary for the plantation workers in a county in Arkansas. As she told of the need of her children for religious books, the Laboratory School children decided to send some. Fifty dollars were given through the offering that evening. Over one hundred people came to this program, and a splendid spirit of fellowship prevailed.

A recent letter from the local chairman states, "Several thrilling letters have come from student teachers. One from southern Indiana writes that she has had such wonderful response to her suggestions and plans." She was the one who looked around the basement of Rich Valley Christian Church on registration day and said to her husband, "This is a fine way to use a basement for the children. We could do that!" And she did!

(This Experimental Laboratory Training School was sponsored by The Town and Country Committee of the Federal Council of Churches, the Home Missions Council, and the International Council of Religious Education; by the Indiana Council of Churches; and by the Cooperating Churches of Howard Township, Indiana.)

Soil Stewardship Emphasis

• As a part of our program in the United Stewardship emphasis period we ran a series of evening services at Pleasantville Evangelical and Reformed Church, Eureka, Pennsylvania, on Soil Stewardship. The church is an open country one, a large share of its membership consisting of farmers.

The series was planned with the cooperation of our County Agent,

The Junior Highs show some of the things they make and use

One beginner shows his handwork to another, illustrating God's beautiful world

Mr. William Greenawalt, and ran for five Sundays. It was entitled "God the Owner—Man the Steward" and ran as follows: "Conserving Our Rural Resources" in which we used a motion picture; "Conservation Practices," using a slide lecture; "Soil Stewardship," with a sermon presenting the Biblical basis of soil conservation; "We Have—We Have Not," which was a panel discussion presented by two men who have gone all-out on soil conservation practices, and two men who are farming as their fathers did. "What About It?" was a summary of the findings.

The congregation showed its interest with good attendance. After the services (with the exception of the one at which Holy Communion was celebrated) coffee and doughnuts were served. The folks stayed and enjoyed the social hour. Some made it an opportunity to become better acquainted with the County Agent; others found time to become better acquainted with their neighbors.

The matter of stewardship of time, talents and money has been discussed rather thoroughly as is evidenced by the giving of approximately seven dollars per member for benevolences as well as a contribution of approximately twenty-five dollars per member for local expenses. It was believed that we could accomplish a two-fold purpose in presenting this series.

We could teach stewardship in another area of man's possessions, and we could teach soil conservation as a matter of religious significance as well as a matter of economic expedience. It is too early to say how many converts to soil conservation we have made, but we are aware of a new spirit concerning the relation of man's religion to his work in the field. —Albert C. Bartholomew

Country Auction Nets $21,680

• The Presbyterian church of Byron, New York (population 850), conducted an auction lasting eight and one-half hours. It was ended by darkness, and was halted—but not dampened—by a shower. More than 500 items were sold to the highest bidders for $21,680. Five thousand people attended. All the items sold were contributed by people in the community. Included among the sales was the produce from a 16-acre Lord's Acre project. More than 300 people helped gather up the items that were sold.

The distribution of the proceeds of the auction included the following:

$5,000 to the Lord's Acre fund.

$1,700 each for Jewish, Catholic and Protestant relief agencies.

$1,500 as a continuing fund for aiding nine families, Jewish, Catholic and Protestant, in Europe, Asia and the U. S.

The Beginners Department finding God's beautiful world as they pick dandelions

Town & Country Church

Published monthly (except June, July, August) by the Committee on Town and Country, Home Missions Council of N.A., the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, and the International Council of Religious Education.

15c a copy; One Dollar a Year

Publication Office: Tenth and Scull Streets, Lebanon, Pa.

Editorial Office: 297 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y.

Entered as second class matter at the Post Office at Lebanon, Pa., under the Act of March 3, 1879.

Board of Editors

Rural Church Officers

The following persons with responsibility for town and country church in the religious bodies and interdenominational agencies constitute the *Board of Editors:*

EDWIN L. BECKER, United Christian Missionary Society, Disciples of Christ; Chairman of the Committee on Town and Country.

MARK A. DAWBER, Executive Secretary, Home Missions Council of North America.

V. A. EDWARDS, Director of Rural Work, National Baptist Convention.

ELLIOTT L. FISHER, Superintendent Town and Country, Board of Missions and Church Extension, the Methodist Church.

KARL S. HENRY, Board of American Missions, United Lutheran Church in America.

BENJAMIN H. CAIN, Evangelical United Brethren.

HENRY S. RANDOLPH, Unit of Rural Church Work, Board of National Missions, Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A.

MARK RICH, Town and Country Work, American Baptist Home Mission Society.

CLIFFORD L. SAMUELSON, Division of Domestic Missions, National Council of the Protestant Episcopal Church.

CLAUDE J. SNYDER, Board of National Missions, Evangelical and Reformed Church.

THOMAS ALFRED TRIPP, Town and Country Department, Board of Home Missions, Congregational Christian Churches.

IRA W. MOOMAW, Church of the Brethren.

BENSON Y. LANDIS, Secretary, Committee on Town and Country, Managing Editor.

DON F. PIELSTICK, Associate Secretary.

How the Rural Church Lives

I. W. MOOMAW

• We once attended the dedication for a little one room chapel in India. The floor was tamped earth, the walls were of reed poles and the roof was thatched with palm leaves. The people were poorly clad and no doubt many were hungry. But to them this was a day of gladness. They had built the chapel with their own hands. Men, women and children had toiled together. It was theirs.

By a strange coincidence, the first monsoon rain fell heavily while the minister was speaking. It was amusing to see all eyes turned toward the roof to see if the thatching was all right. Since then that little fellowship of Christian families has held together through persecution, epidemic and famine. Their little church lives on as a symbol of unity, direction and destiny for their lives.

Membership Trends

We recently made a study of membership trends in 754 rural churches in the United States for the period 1921-1942. We were asked to learn, in part at least, why some churches decline and disappear while others grow and live. Among the 754 congregations, there were two especially which drew our attention. Each had a membership of 90 in 1921 but by 1942 the one had declined to less than 50 while the other had a membership of 234. Why this difference? Soil and other conditions appeared similar. Many factors influence a church in its rise or decline but we shall confine ourselves here to the community or fellowship of member families as it influenced the church in each instance.

The first church had left only nine homes in which all adults were members. These were scattered over a wide area and there was no "community of families." Only one couple lived within a mile of the church. The others were scattered so that the few children in the Sunday School attended four different township schools. Members who came to church appeared motivated either by religious duty or a loyal desire to keep the church alive.

It is the custom there for young people to leave the community after high school. Of the eleven young people who had gone from the church to college of recent years, none had returned there to live. Membership consists entirely of farm people, most of whom are over fifty years of age. Farm tenancy and absentee ownership are increasing and we found no case among members where a father and son or other relatives were in partnership.

The pastor, just out of seminary, was engaged in an almost feverish effort to rebuild the church. We suggested, "It might be well just to assume for a few years that you have no real church. Place more emphasis upon the nurture and establishment of families who in turn will build the church. Let us see if we can discover and call out here a small fellowship of families. If we can, we need have no fear for the church. They will build it." It has now been three years and a splendid beginning has been made. Those who cannot be challenged to join or sustain a dying church will often be drawn to a fellowship of Christian families who are meeting life together.

An Integrated Common Unity

In happy contrast, an integrated "common unity" of member families is characteristic of the second church. Seventy-two percent of the

234 members reside within a four-mile radius of the church. They work, trade and play together during the week. It is natural that they should worship together on Sunday. The church community is their concern and pride. Young people like to settle there and many who go to college return there to live. The school principal, who is also the Sunday School Superintendent, grew up there as a farm boy. The church treasurer, the music leader, two Sunday School teachers, and the adviser to young people are among the eleven who settled there after college. There are sixteen farm situations where the father and son, or other near relatives, are in partnership. It is the custom for local young people to take over any farm homes available. Rarely is a farm sold at public auction. Membership in this church includes not only farmers but teachers, mechanics, business men, two nurses, and others. The pastor is active in community affairs but not in the sense that he himself is responsible for getting things done. His membership in civic organizations is largely the measure of his concern for his people and his friendly desire to bring Christ's message to fruitful acceptance in their common life.

Study of membership trends in the 754 churches impresses one with the extreme importance of maintaining a warm and closely knit fellowship, linked by as many bonds of interest as possible. Rural America today is in a precarious position at this point. During the war over ten million young men and women were uprooted from their communities. Millions of whole families moved from one area to another. Strangers, without such bonds, have in many instances taken the places of those who moved. As if this were not enough, technological changes in agriculture and rural life promise to shake the foundations of the church community even more.

Land and Homes Committee

If I were to make one suggestion, it would be that every local church have a Land and Homes Committee of perhaps five wise and tactful men and women. They can be both a symbol of unity and stability and a source of helpful counsel to young couples and families wishing to locate. Many communities could go much farther than they now do in providing employment for their young people near home. With the great need for decentralization, it appears senseless to rear young people in the countryside only to send them to the city to get jobs. Also, we have done well to consecrate some of our finest sons and daughters to foreign mission service as doctors, ministers and teachers. Let us now with equal challenge and devotion consecrate others to like tasks in the development of some great Christian communities in the United States.

Several years ago, we crossed the lagoon from Venice to see the glass blowers of Murano. For a guide, we shunned the travel agency and employed a Venetian lad. He proved to be a real bargain as a guide for he spoke almost no English and we could thus enjoy the boat ride in silence. About half way across, we came to the walled enclosure where dead bodies from Venice are brought by gondola for burial under sea. The great doors had swung open and a funeral barge was about to enter. Our youthful guide thought at least something ought to be said and with much effort he exclaimed, "The place where dead men come to live."

We would in no way minimize the action or service ministries of the rural church. Its voice must be heard in matters of land policy, conservation, welfare and the many problems which concern rural people. But more than social action, there is a summons that the church of these troubled years become a vital center for leading individuals and families into full Christian discipleship so as to see the hand of God directing life, giving it a sense of direction and destiny. Given a closely knit fellowship, the rural church like the little chapel in India will belong to the people and it will live on.

"Holy Bread"

• Flour—soft, snow-white American flour . . . few gifts can we share with the hungry of Germany which they so gratefully receive as white flour.

From the French Zone we read a report—"For the tiny children one of the most important foods is the flour. Can the Americans send us flour? With it we shall prepare nutritious soups and bake white bread for the little tots."

In the city of Kassel there is a baker who bakes 100 gram rolls—*broetchen*—for the child-feeding program. To him this bread is "Holy Bread." He has been heard to say, "My bakehouse is becoming my house of worship. . . In baking these rolls I have been silently talking to them, seeing before me those multitudes of men over there in America for whom religion means 'serving.'"

A 10-year-old girl of the Jakob Grimm School of Kassel writes: "I thank you for the beautiful white rolls and the thick, warm soup. When we are gathered altogether in the classroom and each one has his or her soup and roll, we say Grace and think of Jesus and of you. We enjoy the soup or porridge very much. It is nice to see the full big jugs. Our lady teacher told us that there is printed on each sack: 'In the name of Christ.' Give my kind regards to all Christians in America and tell them my wish that they may go on living happily and in peace."

German families are often broken families—fathers lost or missing. The mothers, tired and depressed, share with their children the greater portion of their rations. The child feedings mean much to them. One such mother has said:

"The feeding has given back to me a faith in God and men. I was in despair when my tiny tot and my older children asked for bread and I was unable to give them anything. I pray to God that He may bless the givers over there. My life shall become an expression of gratitude." We see the radiant faces of the children and we know that the breaking of this bread is a sacrament. This is Holy Bread.

—Robert Kreider, Cralog, Berlin

When Should a Church Come to Self-Support?

C. M. HANNA

The general principle of home mission aid to the weaker churches is well established in American Protestantism. Much of this aid goes to the small rural churches of the nation. When this aid is given, the church is urged to do all that is possible to hasten the day when it will cease to require this aid and arrive at self-support. Sometimes a church will take advantage of the situation and ask for more aid than it is due, but on the other hand aid-receiving churches are sometimes stigmatized—with the result that churches with a good morale are in too great haste to get off of home mission aid. Both extremes are unfortunate. Certainly it is not good for a church to "ride" the home mission committee or board; but it is also unfortunate for a church with a real opportunity to give up home mission aid too quickly. How can a formula be developed by which the actual need for aid can be established?

What Formula?

There are a number of ways in which churches can be brought to self-support. Where it is possible to increase the number of members or to raise the level of giving on the part of individual members, the church will come to self-support naturally. But often other methods are practiced. Sometimes the church becomes self-supporting by paying the minister an inadequate salary. This is being done in far too many places.

It results in a discouraged and disheartened ministry and the church suffers as a result. The church at large sustains a loss because many fine young men are deterred from entering the ministry because they observe the way ministers in struggling churches are inadequately supported. Many men leave the home mission fields because the salary does not meet the needs of his family.

Another way to bring churches to self-support is to give the field an inadequate program. This often comes about in this way: a small church gets to the place where it is unable to pay a living salary. Some distance away is another church in the same situation, so to save home mission aid the two are grouped together in a yoked field.

The one minister must divide his time between the two churches and the program of both suffers. As the program deteriorates the churches have less income and it later becomes necessary to add another church to the circuit in order to give the minister a living salary. The results are weaker churches and over-burdened pastors. In the end home mission aid must be given to keep the struggling churches alive.

Sufficient Help At Right Time

It can easily be established that in many cases by giving sufficient mission aid at the right time many mission churches can in the end be made into fully self-supporting fields which will contribute liberally to the total benevolence program of the church at large. Can some formula be devised by which it can be determined when it is proper to give a church aid as a matter of right?

On the other hand there are a great number of rural churches in high birth rate, low income areas which can never come to self-support. Many of these churches should receive liberal home mission aid to enable them to put on an enriched church program which will prepare their youth for migration to the city and at the same time build up the membership in spiritual strength. The rural churches that are continually exporting members to other areas should have a church program that is in every way as good as the program in the areas to which her people move.

There are a few very definite factors that can be taken into account in determining the whole matter of

home mission aid to a church or an area. First, there is the matter of density of population. Are there enough people within reach of the church to enable it to build up a supporting constituency large enough to support an adequate program? People in sparsely settled areas have a right to an adequate ministry. This is recognized by most states in the realm of education and an effort is made to give the child in a small rural community an education somewhere near in quality to that received by the child in the more thickly settled areas. Can the church be less Christian than the state?

The Matter of Income

Second, there is the matter of income. Certain sections of the nation and certain areas within sections have incomes which are much lower than income in other sections and areas. Jesus said He came that the poor might have the Gospel preached unto them. Surely His Church must be interested in seeing that the churches ministering to poor people have an adequate church program even if they cannot pay for it.

In the third place, the ratio of children to adults must be taken into account. In urban areas only 301 out of every 1,000 people are under 20 but in rural farm areas 427 out of every 1,000 are under 20. This means that in rural areas a few adults must support institutions for a large number of young people who are not yet economically pro-

ductive. This dependency ratio varies greatly in different parts of the country and it should be taken into account in determining the amount of home mission aid to be given.

In the fourth place, it is to be taken for granted that home mission aid will in some way be related to the willingness of the people in the aided church to do their part in the way of giving. This test is not easy to apply because often the program of the church needing aid is so poor that it does not challenge the people to give. If home mission aid is withdrawn as fast as the people increase their giving they become discouraged. They give more but the program of the church is not improved —so they say, "What's the use?" If aid-receiving churches were told that their increased giving would be used to enrich the program of their church and withdrawn only when their church program approached in quality the program of the stronger church, the people would give more liberally and at the same time they would be built up in the faith.

This Has Been Tried

This has been tried in a group of 13 churches in a mid-west Synod with amazing results. The people were made to see that home mission aid was given as a matter of right because their area was low in population density, low in income and high in dependency ratio. They were also assured that most of the increase in their giving to current expenses would be used to improve their local program rather than to reduce home mission aid.

The results have been remarkable. They have increased their staff from five to nine. They have increased salaries to staff by 30% and at the same time they have increased their benevolence giving by about 700%. The improved programs made possible by continued home mission aid have paid off in cash as well as improved churches and enriched lives. While the home mission board has continued its aid it has been more than reimbursed by the increase in benevolence giving and these churches which were once a liability financially have become a real asset.

When the church has the faith to say to a needy field that sufficient aid will be given to make possible an adequate program, mission churches will respond with more adequate giving.

In the Periodicals

• *Current Religious Thought,* Oberlin, Ohio, June 1947, presents Fred L. Brownlee's account of the important work done at "The Rural Life School at Bricks, North Carolina." This story is taken from the author's new book, "New Day Ascending."

Herbert E. Stotts writes about the "Challenge of the Rural Church" in *The Pastor,* Nashville, Tenn., November 1947. The pressing need for trained leadership in the rural church is countered in this article with specific suggestions as to how that need can best be met.

In *Brethren Service News,* Elgin, Ill., October 1947. M. R. Zigler reports on his recent 30,000-mile journey from America to China and Japan and return. Mr. Zigler, representing the Brethren Service Commission, made this trip in order to study the need for rehabilitation projects.

The Methodist Woman, Cincinnati, Ohio, December 1947, is an issue on the "Dollar" and what it means in the lives of people everywhere. In it Marjorie Minkler states her views under the title, "My Dollar Goes to a Rural Area."

The Lutheran, Philadelphia, Pa., November 19, 1947, publishes the story of the changes in farm life under the title, "Revolution on the Farm," by William G. Mather. A second article by Dr. Mather, describing the dangers and opportunities of the rural church today, appears in the November 26th issue of the same publication. The latter article is entitled, "The Farmer Must be Converted."

Lutheran Herald, Minneapolis, Minn., submits a series of three articles on "The Church and Co-operatives," by L. S. Imm, in its publications of September 30, October 14 and October 21, 1947. These articles give much information on a subject which is currently very much to the fore.

In *Zions Herald,* Boston, Mass., October 8, 1947, Bernice Cole Barker speaks out against a problem which is fast becoming recognized by many small churches in our land under the title of "A Lay Woman Speaks." Mrs. Barker says: "Due to lack of sufficient funds to support a resident pastor in small rural churches, we must either accept a student as a supply pastor or a man who has given his best years of service and so has not the strength to meet the challenge of our present need."

In the *St. Louis Globe-Democrat,* St. Louis, Mo., November 9, 1947, Dorothy O. Moore tells of the outstanding service of the Rev. Thomas C. Huff under the title, "The Ozark Preacher Who Leads His Flock to Prosperity Over Goat Trails."

The Christian Rural Fellowship Bulletin, New York, N. Y., October 1947, features "Home Valley," by William G. Mather and Irene L. Gochnour. This story relates to the family type farm and the land and homes movement.

Theodore C. Scheifele writes about "A Practical Rural Program in Religion" in *The Presbyterian,* Philadelphia, Pa., November 29, 1947. Mr. Scheifele is president of The Pennsylvania Country Life Association and pastor of the Hartleton Lutheran Parish, Pennsylvania.

What Is Your Evangelistic "Potential"?

HARRY C. MUNRO

"You shall receive power" said Jesus to the first generation of Christian teachers.

And what power they did receive! That power might have controlled the atom, and bid it serve rather than destroy mankind. That power is latent today in the lives of two million Sunday school teachers.

Is there some process of "spiritual mission" by which that vast potential could be released and harnessed to the task of redeeming our fear-possessed, befuddled, lost generation? Yes, it is a part of the Christian faith that there is, in the lives of Christians, an evangelistic "potential" equal to the task of evangelizing even this generation.

But what is evangelistic potential, besides being a high sounding new phrase? Is it something we can explore and estimate and direct? What is *your* evangelistic potential?

These searching questions are of first importance among those confronted by every church and every Christian worker.

Meaning of Evangelism

First, what do we mean by evangelism? It means two processes, each of which depends upon the other. First, it consists in discovering persons for whose spiritual welfare a given church or group is responsible and throwing Christian fellowship around them until they become a part of that group.

Second, it means exerting such an influence upon them through that fellowship, that they are moved along into a saving experience of Jesus Christ and vital membership in the church itself. In every fellowship service and study group the church has vast potential for carrying out those processes. Any group in the church which is not carrying out both of those processes represents unused capacity or inoperative evangelistic potential. The self-study project in the Teaching Mission is a means of revealing this unused potential.

Concern For Persons

The first factor in evangelistic potential is *concern for persons.* It is possible for a class or club or even a church to be more concerned for its own institutional strength and welfare than for persons. It may seek persons more because they can serve it than because it longs to save them. Or a successful leader may regard persons actually as a means to further his own success and self-esteem more than as objects of his love and self-giving. Statistical goals in evangelism may be necessary but they are dangerous.

On the other hand, the Shepherd Heart is concerned for the individual, not the "lost" in general, but the particular lost individual, be it a coin, or a sheep, or a boy. For that reason Christian leadership is very much a matter of personal friendship. The Christian teacher's evangelistic concern gets him wrapped up, not in the class, but in the persons in the class. Each is important, not just as one more to count, but chiefly because he is so different from the others and so is valued for his own peculiar worth. No two are alike. No two are to be treated quite alike. Hence the small intimate class, the friendly person-to-person relationship, the deep person concern, reflect the evangelistic potential of the Sunday school. It has its own pattern. There is no reason for imitating any other kind of school.

Must Seek Persons

The second factor in evangelistic potential is another expression of concern for persons—for those not yet within the Christian fellowship—*seeking, fellowshiping,* and *holding persons.* The Shepherd Heart is never so preoccupied with the ninety and nine as to forget the one who is lost. The class or department which has a carefully prepared, frequently revised, and constantly used "responsibility list" of persons whom it is definitely seeking to bring within its fellowship, is using its evangelistic potential in this respect.

But recruiting new members must never become merely a device for filling the places left vacant by those who have dropped out. In fact a person cannot be "dropped" from a responsibility list, except to be reassigned to some other responsibility list. Christian concern does not just casually withdraw itself.

Home-Church Relations

Home-church relationships are vital in evangelistic effectiveness. The best church school cannot take over the whole job of Christian teaching. It can supplement the influence of the Christian home. It can make up in part to the children of spiritually delinquent homes what they inevitably miss. It can offer help to every home in doing its task better. But Christian nurture is in its very nature a shared task of home and church.

The church's evangelistic potential consists in part, therefore, of the working partnership which it succeeds in establishing with all families represented in its membership and responsibility list. This is a discouraging and slow moving process. Parents so willingly abdicate in favor of the church. It seems so much simpler just to take over, asking of the home only that it facilitate the church's program. Yet to retreat to that position is to leave largely unused one of the greatest of all sources of evangelistic potential, that of the adequately functioning Christian family. This is the next great frontier in Christian education.

Worship and Churchmanship

Experiences of *worship and churchmanship,* beginning early enough and with compelling attractiveness, constitute another rich source of evangelistic potential. For one reason or another a yawning gap tends frequently to develop between Sunday school and church. Many persons, with a seemingly satisfactory Sunday school experience, never get over that gap into full vital participating church membership.

The way in which the worship experiences of children are provided and specific, carefully planned experiences of church participation, are unused potential in many churches to bridge that gap.

Definite personal *commitment to Christ* as Savior and Lord is the goal and climax of the many lesser tributary decisions with which Christian teaching is always dealing. They tell the story of an elegant new Post Office building, costing millions of dollars, being dedicated in an Eastern city. But when people looked around for a place to mail a letter, none could be found.

A program of Christian teaching, however elaborate, which does not climax in all-out personal commitments is equally futile. Christian education must not be so preoccupied with the antecedents and consequences of Christian commitment as to miss the real point. The long range and the immediate preparation for this experience, and the skill and thoroughness with which it is conditioned, constitute part of the high potential of evangelism.

Self-examination in these respects will enable the Christian leader and the class or group to answer the question, "What is my evangelistic potential? How much of it is operative?"

Purposes of This Journal

The purposes of this Journal are:

A. To encourage cooperation among rural churches.

B. To improve the administration of the local church, this to include organization of the church, finance, religious education, community relationships, and the training of lay leadership.

C. To stimulate the development of a Christian philosophy of rural life, this to embrace ethical issues in agriculture, social reconstruction, and government programs; and the content of the minister's message.

Part of Larger Program

The Journal is an important part of an enlarged "cooperative rural church program" that will encourage a national "rural church movement."

Man Who Made Radio Fortune Heads To Humble Pastor Post

HARMON W. NICHOLS

• James Wesley McClain, who earned $500,000 in radio as the original "Dr. I. Q." and gave up his career to study for the ministry, recently headed for his new parish in Texas —with his last $35 in his pocket.

The Rev. Mr. McClain's ambition is to become a country parson, and as such, he never can hope to make more than $2400 a year.

"Not Sorry" Over Change

He was among 19 students who knelt and received diplomas recently in the little chapel at the Seabury-Western Theological Seminary.

"I'm not at all sorry I left a fat job before the microphone to appear behind the pulpit," he said. "All right, so I'm broke. I don't consider that I threw my money away. Part of it paid for my training here. I have a lot of expensive movie equipment —which is my hobby. And I have a library worth $10,000—many of the volumes on theology."

McClain, his attractive wife, Doris, and three children, ranging in age from 8 years to 8 months, left town immediately. He will take over the Eastland, Texas, mission. . . . Eastland is a town of 4500. He says he will feel right at home. Although born in Kentucky, he has been a resident of Texas during most of his 35 years.

No "Lower Left Aisle"

The former Dr. I. Q. during his years on the air was accustomed to microphones in the balconies and in "the lower left aisle." But there were none of these in Thursday's solemn ceremonies.

After the closing prayers, singing of a hymn and the postlude, the graduates filed out of the chapel with bowed heads. Once outside, McClain proved what his classmates had said about him—that he was "one of the boys."

There was much back-slapping and "Congrats, Jim, old boy."

"I am a convert to the Episcopal Church," McClain said. "I like people. I like country people. That's why I want to devote the rest of my life to small town missions. I have no ambition to be elevated to a higher station in the church. I'm as high now as I'll ever be—and I'm satisfied." —*United Press*

Eyes to the Future

• Through the rural specialists of the Baptist State Conventions new churches are being established, weak churches are being revitalized, pastors are catching a new vision of responsibility and opportunity. All across our Northern Baptist Convention there is a great movement to strengthen our rural churches. A definite emphasis is being placed on a more adequate training for rural pastors and leaders—both those now serving churches and also young people looking forward to full time Christian service.

Our colleges, seminaries and Bible Schools are establishing Town and Country Church Departments. Our in-service training school at Green Lake is providing a wonderful opportunity for pastors and their wives to increase their capacity to serve on the local field. Encouragement and guidance are being given pastors and churches by the personal visitation and counselling of our state directors.

Our whole denomination is being made conscious of the fact that the well-being of our Town and Country Churches is vitally important to the on-going of our city churches and the development of the Northern Baptist Convention as a whole. Northern Baptists would do well to offer a prayer of thanks unto God for the splendid work that is being done through the Department of Town and Country Church work.

—CARLTON W. SAYWELL,
Iowa Baptist Convention

Recruiting By The Rural Ministry

W. H. THOMPSON

The rural pastor has many opportunities to guide young men and women of his parish in "choosing their life work." The radio, daily newspaper, current magazine and public education has eliminated the former isolation and provincialism of most rural communities. So the wise and consecrated rural pastor who has kept in touch with world-wide situations and human needs can sympathetically guide his young people into such opportunities as will challenge them to their best.

What are some basic principles to be kept in mind?

The Doors Are Open

First: the door of progress in every phase of life is wide open for creative work and constructive contribution. When I was in college it seemed as if most of the world's work had been done already, and that the job of the student, in order to earn a degree, was to comprehend what had been done, memorize the main outlines of such achievement, be able to make passing marks, and perhaps in turn teach this to the next generation. (We had people even then, who thought the end of the world was just around the corner.)

But travel by air, fission of the atom, preserving of foods by refrigeration, artificial insemination of dairy cows, use of thyroprotein, better techniques of human relations, and a thousand other promising aids to the more abundant life have come since. The chances are (unless city-dwellers and institutions everywhere be suddenly wiped out by atomic bombs) that even greater progress in every phase of human life will be made in the days ahead. The young people of today are the researchers and trail-blazers of tomorrow.

All Vocations Important

Second: Every vocation which ministers to human need is *sacred*. There is no *ethical primacy* in any vocation.

It was during the financial depression following World War I, when the price of Indiana and Illinois farm land had slumped from $400 to $50 per acre. I, an ordained minister, asked my brother Jim, who was managing a farm, if farmers like ministers had to experience a "call." His droll reply was, "Well, at least one has to have more *religion* to be a farmer these days than a minister has to have." Every vocation today could use more of the basic spiritual factors in its personnel.

Square Pegs in Square Holes

Third: Square pegs should be in square holes, and round pegs should be in round holes. Guidance agencies list more than 2,500 vocations today. Young people should be assisted to "find their places" according to their latent talents. There is less justification today for "misfits" than ever before. Rural pastors can help their young people to "find their holes."

Fourth: The motive of "service" should take precedence when one is making a choice of a vocation. And here is where the idea of "Christian leadership" enters. The choice in ideals must be made between "money" or "life."

Other things being equal, rural youth have all around them those things usually designated as "Christian": love and respect for other personalities; democratic and co-operative techniques for achieving objectives; respect for law and order; and recognition and appreciation of the Divine—the Presence of God—in the things and events of the family, the community, and the world.

Every area of today's life is in search of persons who, employed in specific vocations from which wages or salaries are extracted to "pay living expenses," at the same time are "giving their lives in service" to their fellowmen everywhere: the vocations of law, medicine, education, business, transportation, civic government, state-craft, labor, management, agriculture, cooperatives, insurance, religion—all these challenge recruits who feel "the call" to dedicate their lives therein to Kingdom service.

Every rural pastor, who during his years of experience adds to his list of youth who become renowned for their contribution to "the abundant life" in the world, will thereby have his share of thrilling emotion and ultimate satisfaction.

Raymond Massey's Appeal For Agricultural Migrants

• Raymond Massey, well-known stage and screen actor, has given his support to a nation-wide appeal for aid to agricultural migrants, according to an announcement by Miss Edith Lowry, executive secretary of the Home Missions Council of North America.

The Council, representing 23 Protestant denominations, has been working to improve the social and economic conditions of agricultural migrants for the past twenty years.

Calling attention to the disintegration of the Federal program of assistance to migrants, Mr. Massey emphasized the "tremendous need" for an expanded program of the Home Missions Council "to combat the mounting wave of desperation, disinheritance and misery."

Under the Federal program, clean camps with decent sanitation facilities were built, medical aid was provided and attempts were made to safeguard the rights of agricultural migrants as American citizens, Mr. Massey explained. Now, due to the lack of Congressional appropriations, these services will be terminated, he added and the migrants will once more be at the mercy of crew leaders and farmers.

"Migrants, in the midst of a period of unprecedented prosperity in America, are still the disinherited Joads about whom John Steinbeck wrote," concluded Mr. Massey.

Reprints of "Heartless Harvest" by Howard Whitman, which appeared in September issues of Collier's magazine, will accompany the letter of appeal to 50,000 individuals throughout the country. Mr. Whitman visited migrant camps.

The Grace of Giving

H. C. LOUGHHEAD

• There is need for modern Pauls to point Christians to the example of stewardship. His glowing example of raising a "World Emergency Fund" in the early church is worthy of most careful study.

Paul had some straightforward suggestions as to a regular plan of giving to the support of the cause of Christ. I Cor. 16:2—"Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God has prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come." Three fundamental principles of giving are stated here. To be really Christian, giving should be planned. Here is a definite plan of weekly contributing. "On the first day of the week" lay aside the Lord's portion. Thus they would avoid the embarrassment and difficulty of special drives for money.

The folk who give richly of their time, abilities and money are those who most carefully plan to do so. It makes it possible for them to have a reserve from which to give. It is an acknowledgment of God's place in their lives. It indicates that it is more than a casual relationship.

Giving Is Act of Worship

To be really Christian, giving must be individual. "Let every one of you lay by him in store." Giving is the supreme act of worship. It is an act of offering oneself to God. Thus it is important to train every person, beginning with small children, in the grace of systematic giving, as an act of loving loyalty to Christ. To fail at this point is a grievous injustice.

Christian giving is always in proportion to the degree of prosperity of the individual. "As God hath prospered him." Surely Christ's law of love was not calculated to obtain from God's children a lesser acknowledgment than the Mosaic Law. The purpose of Jesus was not to dispense with these great principles of life, but rather to fill them full, to make them effective in experience. Our loving loyalty should lead each Christian to begin by laying aside a tithe. Should God so prosper us as to give a large income, then we should acknowledge our sense of stewardship by increasing the proportion.

Indication of Interest

What we do with what we have indicates our interest, definitely determines our moral and spiritual growth, and becomes in fact an act of worship. If we are to save our churches spiritually, we must train our membership to become Christian stewards.

An amazing number of methods are being used to achieve this objective. Every local situation has to be carefully studied and a plan developed that will best meet the need. A pastor of a very small church of people economically underprivileged introduced the idea of planned giving and the use of envelopes. In the first five months of this year they gave more through the offering plate than had been given all of last year. The church in these recent months has developed more spiritual vitality than it has known for many years.

Amazing Number of Methods

Another church was being served by a young pastor who had to work on farms and in the coal mine to provide the necessities for his family. He received the offerings which averaged considerably less than ten dollars a week. No baptisms had occurred in the church for several years. The congregation was challenged to accept a plan of systematic giving. The result, financially, is shown in the offerings which increased to considerably over twenty dollars a week. Spiritually there came a revival without special meetings, which gave the church a fine increase in membership by baptism.

The every-member enlistment is the most widely used and effective plan of developing Christian givers. Some prefer to follow the plan of having it on loyalty Sunday. The people are informed, usually by mail, before the service of the financial needs of the church and are invited to come prepared to accept definite plans of giving. Other churches instruct visitors who go to the homes by twos and seek to train and enlist the people in systematic giving. The main objective should always be to train people in Christian stewardship rather than to merely raise a budget.

Informing The Constituency

The matter of informing the constituency of the financial needs and plans of the church is very important. Some churches send about three mimeographed letters before the enlistment calling attention to the services rendered by the church, plans for the future and the proposed budget. At least one of our Pennsylvania churches had a very attractive two-page folder printed which sought to personalize the items of the budget through pictures and statements as a preparation for enlistment Sunday. It is equally important to keep the people informed through the year of progress in the church and its financial status. Many rural churches do this through letters.

A few churches are using a plan of keeping no record of what individuals give. They have no place on their offering envelopes for either number or name. Each week their bulletins carry a statement of the amount of the budget and what the offering was the week before. The danger in such a plan is that it may fail to train the people in the grace of Christian stewardship. It throws such training entirely into the realm of a general approach. Most people need definite and personal coaching in this matter.

The Lord's Acre Project

Many rural churches are reviving the Biblical method of setting aside something definitely for the Lord through Lord's Acre projects. This should never be allowed to replace the weekly plan of laying aside the Lord's portion of our income. Usually it is wise to use it only for specific projects of the church over and

above the regular items of the budget. This cultivation of a field, the raising of an animal, or the setting aside of a certain percentage of a crop which is harvested and given as a love offering has a great potential value in stewardship training. Farm people need to be made conscious of their high calling as tillers of the soil and workers together with God to feed his children of the world.

Paul was talking about a great principle of life when he says in II Cor. 9:6, 7, 8, 11, "He that soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he that soweth bountifully shall reap bountifully. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give, not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you: that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work . . . which causeth through us thanksgiving to God."

Harvest Festival Honors County Agent

V. A. EDWARDS

• In Madison, Morgan County, Georgia, lives the Rev. W. M. Mitchell, a pastor of two rural churches about twelve miles apart, namely: Mt. Perry and Smyrna Baptist Churches. So practical and constructive is his church program that he was recently selected by the Georgia Council of Town and Country Pastors as the "Rural Pastor of The Year."

In the early fall of 1947, the following report was received from Rev. Mitchell's church community which in our judgment is worthy of sharing. It reads:

Under the able leadership of Rev. W. M. Mitchell, Pastor of Smyrna Baptist Church, the Morgan county farmers, their families and friends came to the church at high noon on the bright September day amid white fields of cotton to honor their county agent, Lloyd C. Trawick, Jr., in appreciation of the work that has been carried on in the county.

A well planned program was carried out with Rev. Mitchell as master of ceremonies. A sample of products from the farms of the farmers were brought and given to the county agent as a token.

J. K. West gave interesting facts and figures on the farm population trends from 1920 to 1945. He said that we should think of the past, live in the present and prepare for the future if we expect to live the good life. Some of the essentials for doing these things are:

1. Individual and community planning
2. Continue to increase soil building practices
3. Increase livestock on farm
4. Grow more products at home
5. Conserve food and machinery
6. Stay out of debt
7. Save

Albert Bacon explained the agricultural Extension program as being a (1) democratic program, (2) practical educational program, (3) program for action, (4) program for participation. He also stated that the church and the soil are closely related. Improved soil means better homes, good churches, interested people and healthier communities in which to live.

R. T. Church stated that where there is progress, there are evidences of the pulpit and plow working close together. We must continue to encourage a closer unity of these two pillars of progress so that we may have a greater progress in the years to come in form of greater leaders, greater churches, more improved farms and last but not least a lasting peace.

Mr. Mitchell has been commended for the fine work he is doing in the county as a Rural Pastor in helping people to realize the importance of the soil. One farmer stated in a meeting that farming had been a pleasure since Mr. Mitchell came into his community as pastor. The whole south is looking for leaders like Mr. Mitchell who has come to realize that good soil will help to save souls.

Barbecue and Brunswick stew was served to all.

College President Writes

THE STATE COLLEGE OF WASHINGTON
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
PULLMAN, WASHINGTON

November 14, 1947

Committee on Town & Country
Home Missions Council of N. A.
297 4th Avenue
New York 10, New York

GENTLEMEN:

Under separate cover, addressed to your circulation department, the State College of Washington is renewing a subscription to TOWN AND COUNTRY CHURCH.

Realizing that editors often like to know something about their subscribers and also realizing the public function of both the press and educational institutions, may I tell you something about this institution and offer its services also to you in any way which may be useful.

The State College of Washington is a university of 6,800 students, with perhaps the finest technological and agricultural science facilities in the Pacific Northwest. Institutes have been established in each of these fields and service is being given not only to the state but to the development of the Pacific Northwest.

It is dedicated to the proposition that the Pacific Northwest should no longer be merely or primarily a raw materials source; indeed that the strengthening of the nation and the realization of the potentialities of trans-Pacific trade depend in no small degree upon the diversified agricultural and industrial development of the Pacific Northwest fabulously blessed in terms of natural resources.

This institution is not neglecting the liberal arts and sciences, and certainly not the political and social studies. To insure a broad viewpoint we take special pains to attract foreign students and high scholarship students from other states of the union.

If your staff finds occasion to visit us, or to call upon us for information, this institution will be happy to respond.

Yours truly,

WILSON COMPTON, *President*

Editors of Weekly Newspapers Report Increased Religious Interest

• Religion as expressed by church attendance and by the spiritual and moral interest of the people is on the upgrade *in rural America* in the opinion of country newspaper editors who replied to a recent poll on that subject conducted by *The American Press,* a monthly publication published in the interest of weekly newspapers.

Of those replying to the questionnaire 67% said that church attendance in their communities was higher now than before the war, while 48% said that there was an increasing interest among rural people in moral and spiritual values.

On the other hand, 20% of the editors reported that church attendance had not increased while 13% reported it is actually lower than before the war.

One question relating to church attendance by young people brought out that in 45% of the communities church attendance by young people was higher than before the war, while 30% reported no increase and 25% showed a lower attendance.

In answer to the question, "Do you agree with the statements of church leaders that a strong religious revival is needed in this country to prevent another war?" 60% of the editors replied that a religious revival was necessary, 13% favored some sort of revival but did not think it would prevent war, while 22% replied with an unqualified "no." Five per cent replied that they were uncertain whether a revival would do any good.

Special notation and explanations, amplifying answers to the questionnaire, were made by practically every editor.

In commenting on a drop in attendance in his community, D. L. Keith, editor of the Windom, Minn., *Citizen,* said: "Preachers have dropped the preaching of the Bible to preach a gospel of 'social development.' Since there are dozens of other institutions doing the same thing it is natural that fewer people can see anything in church membership," while C. E. Bray, Easton, Md., *Star Democrat,* said that he believed gambling, horse-racing, Sunday movies and Sunday baseball kept people away from the church. "You cannot serve God and mammon," he observed.

Everett White, pastor of three churches and editor of the Attica, Ind., *Ledger-Tribune,* wrote: "Young men who were formerly faithful in their church attendance have turned a deaf ear to my pleadings since they returned from the armed forces. Frankly, the theory that battle experience caused many of these fellows to forsake their evil ways, in my opinion, is not true. Although these fellows may have felt very close to God at the moment, they have forgotten."

On the other hand, Larry C. Thompson, Jefferson City, Tenn., *Standard,* noted that church attendance is much higher among veterans and young people and concluded, "some of us had to learn to pray real hard."

Other interesting comments by the country editors as reported in the July issue of *The American Press,* are:

"Too many use the Sabbath for special amusement or pleasure. Have ignored the Biblical command to 'keep it holy'."—Homer Steen, Floydada, Tex., *Hesperian.*

* * *

"We believe there is now a general awakening to the realization that man has become confused in values and there is evidence that a reappraisal of moral and spiritual values is now going on. People are literally worn out with big movements, huge undertakings and world strategy and would like some time out to just plain live."—Carl B. Miller, Winfield, W. Va., *Democrat.*

* * *

"Morality, sincerity, honesty and many of the old virtues have been on a gradual decline. Civilization needs to swing back toward Christian Living."—Percy Landrum, Hartford, Ky., *News.*

"We have tried every means except the principles of Jesus Christ in an effort to prevent war. It's about time we tried those."—Neil O. Davis, Auburn, Ala., *Bulletin.*

* * *

"Religious revival needed. Hatred, greed and jealousy, all contrary to religious teachings, cause war."—Jere N. Moore, Milledgville, Ga., *Union-Recorder.*

* * *

"There is no doubt but what the teachings of Christ must somehow permeate the hearts of individuals before we get a peaceful world."—W. H. Gilpin, Barton, Vt., *Monitor.*

* * *

"Nothing is so much needed in America today as an awakening to the need for a proper evaluation of spiritual qualities in the individual. Call it religion or otherwise, it is badly needed."—W. H. Berkey, Cassopolis, Mich., *Vigilant.*

* * *

"Religion should and must be revived. Churches constitute the basis. . . . We need the revival of thankfulness for deeds accomplished, cooperative effort, community harmony. The ministers have more time for this than any other group of individuals, hence it falls into their duties. The newspapers should carry a heavy part of this burden."—Roy R. Rucker, Bridgeport, Ill., *Leader.*

* * *

"I favor a strong revival but am pessimistic enough to believe it will not occur."—Duer S. Brady, Minden, Neb., *Courier.*

* * *

"We have got to begin thinking a little more about the spiritual and not all material. Do not believe in old-fashioned revivals."—J. T. Hacking, Glascow, Mont., *Courier.*

Send Us An Item

• TOWN AND COUNTRY CHURCH is a cooperative enterprise. Send us an item for publication now. We want short news items or longer articles describing parish programs.

What is the Largest Open Country Church?

• Recently Bethel Evangelical Church, Freelandville, Indiana, Rev. A. H. Wegener, Pastor, celebrated the 100th anniversary of the organization of the congregation. The minister writes:

"Bethel Evangelical and Reformed Church is an open country church, the largest of that type in our denomination. It is sometimes referred to as the largest open country church in the middle west and even in the U.S. I have no statistics to verify such a contention but I have sometimes wondered what truth there might be in this statement. Would you have any way of checking by statistics which you may have of open country churches? I would be interested in making a survey of this type of churches.

"Bethel Church is located on Highway 58, one mile east of Freelandville, Ind., twenty miles north of Vincennes and 100 miles south of Indianapolis."

The pastor's post office address is Edwardsport, Indiana. He gave the following figures:

Communicant Membership	721
Contributing Membership	682
Baptized But Unconfirmed Membership	193
Sunday School Enrollment	761

Country Minister Makes Front Page News

• *The World Telegram,* New York, for November 17th, told about the town of Chichester, New York, which was sold at auction a few years ago but "didn't stay licked." They learned how to make democracy work the hard way. They decided to start new industries and maintain their institutions.

The reporter says that some of the credit "for the community decency" goes to the Rev. Dennis Osgood, minister of the Methodist Church. The reporter says that the little Methodist church clings to the hillside at the upper end of the town.

When things were bad Mr. Osgood took a job with the road gang in order to keep food on the parsonage table.

The reporter says that the freedom train did not stop at Chichester. The village is too small. There isn't even a spur line of a railroad for the freedom train, but it doesn't really matter because the folks of Chichester need no reminder of democracy.

A New Reading List

• "A Selected Reading List for Town and Country Pastors" has been compiled jointly by the Committee on Town and Country Church of the Home and State Missions Planning Council of the Disciples of Christ, and the Committee on Town and Country. It is published by the Department of Church Development and Evangelism, The United Christian Missionary Society, Indianapolis, Indiana.

Copies may be had at 5c each through the literature department of the Home Missions Council, 297 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y. Some seventy-five titles of books and pamphlets are grouped under the following headings:

Rural Life
Social and Economic Aspects
Religious Interpretation
The Program of the Church
Worship and the Devotional Life
Evangelism and Church Extension
Finance
Religious Education
Church Building and Grounds
The Church in Community Life
Inter-Church Cooperation

An Exchange of Telegrams

Secretary
National Convocation on the Church in Town and Country
Central Presbyterian Church
50 North Plymouth Avenue
Rochester 6, New York

NCRLC sends brotherly greetings congratulates you upon your interests in rural people. Our happy relation with your group has given us added encouragement and strength in working for the betterment of persons families and communities. Christ to the country and the country to Christ is our motto. We invite you to attend our convention Lafayette Louisiana November 23-26. Will dance and dine with Evangeline.

—Monsignor L. G. Ligutti,
National Catholic Rural Life Conference

Rt. Rev. Msgr. L. G. Ligutti
Catholic Student Center
S. W. Louisiana State Institute
Lafayette, Louisiana

The Committee on Town and Country has given me the pleasant task of thanking you for your gracious telegram sent to our Convocation. We send you brotherly greetings and our wishes for a most satisfactory conference. Those of our people who have attended the National Catholic Rural Life Conference have always remarked about your devotion to rural families and communities, your thoroughness and your missionary spirit. Please convey our thoughts to the gathering.

—Benson Y. Landis

American Institute of Cooperation

• Karl D. Butler, Director of Research for the Cooperative G. L. F. Exchange, Inc., Ithaca, N. Y., has been chosen as the new president of the American Institute of Cooperation. He takes office about the close of the year 1947 and will become the second president of the Institute since it was reorganized three years ago. Raymond W. Miller, president, will become Dean of Public Relations for the Institute on a part-time basis. Headquarters of the Institute will remain at Washington, D. C., without changes in the staff of the Institute.

The Convocation Report

• The Committee on Town and Country will publish as usual a report of the Annual Convocation, held at Rochester, New York, November 4-6, 1947. This pamphlet report will contain addresses and a digest of the deliberations of the eighteen commissions. It will be published as soon as final copy is in hand and it can be gotten through the printing process. The price will be 25c a copy.

Book Review

Rural Parish! By Anna Laura Gebhard Abingdon Cokesbury Press, New York and Nashville. $1.50.

This is a delightful human story of the average rural church. It should be read by every rural minister and his wife, for it will reflect for them something of the unheralded beauty of the rural ministry.

Having known the author and her husband for some years, comprehending something of their innate love for rural people, and also knowing something about the ministry they have rendered, I can say that this book is not fiction but a record of actual loving service that has brought its own reward.

Mrs. Gebhard is to be complimented on having put into simple and beautiful language the everyday experiences of the rural ministry, and I can only express the hope that rural ministers and their wives will avail themselves of the pleasure of reading this heart-warming story.

—MARK A. DAWBER

Family Farm a Cornerstone

• At the Roman Catholic Tri-State Congress, held in Grand Rapids, Michigan, Charles F. Brannen, Assistant Secretary of Agriculture, said that the family farm is the "cornerstone of our national strength," and "one of the most effective bulwarks any nation can have against communism." He said that long-range policy for agriculture was not being dressed up overnight in the government buildings in Washington but by consultation with farmers.

The Friendly Towns

• *The New York Herald Tribune* Fresh Air Fund sends needy children to friendly towns for winter vacations as well as during the summer months. The fund is also concerned because there seems to be increasing difficulty in rural communities in extending invitations to the city children. Results of field trips indicate that households in rural communities are having increasing difficulty "in making ends meet."

Town & Country Committee Publications

Available Through the Literature Department, Home Missions Council
297 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y.

TOWN AND COUNTRY CHURCH, periodical 15c a copy; $1.00 a year
Circular Describing TOWN AND COUNTRY CHURCH ..... Free on application
Comity Principles—1947 ..... 5c
Commitment of Advance—1947 ..... 5c
Convocation Reports:
Urgent Tasks of the Church in Town and Country—1944 ..... 25c
The Rural Church in These Moving Times—1946—1946 ..... 25c
Rural Life Sunday Order of Service—Annual, Spring 5c
Harvest Festival Order of Service—Annual, Fall 5c
In-Service Training for the Minister in Town and Country 5c
Life in the Larger Parish, by Margaret J. Harris 25c
Man's Relation to the Land 5c
Story of John Frederich Oberlin, by A. F. Beard 25c
Religious Education in Rural America: A Symposium 10c
Reading List—1947 ..... 5c
Annual Report ..... Single copies free
"The Felton Pamphlets" (By Ralph Felton, Drew Theological Seminary):
The Church Bus 10c
The Church Farm 10c
Cooperative Churches 30c
The Lord's Acre 10c
One Foot on the Land 35c
The Salary of Rural Pastors 10c
The Size of the Rural Parish 10c
The Church and the Land 25c
A Hundred Games for Rural Communities 30c

Methodist Challenges Catholics

• Dr. Raymond W. Miller, President of the American Institute of Cooperation, a Methodist layman, asked the Roman Catholic church to take the lead in promoting a better balance between agriculture and industry in the undeveloped areas of the country. Dr. Miller addressed the annual conference of the National Catholic Rural Life Conference at Lafayette, Lousiana.

Dr. Miller referred with approval to the Mississippi program to balance agriculture with industry. He also proposed that the church take the initiative in removing misunderstandings now dividing rural and urban people, in short, for leadership in inducing city and country people to understand one another.

Pastor Studying Larger Parish

• Rev. Frank R. Meese, the Egyptian Larger Parish, 1217 Pine Street, Eldorado, Illinois, writes that he is making a study of the larger parish plan of the town and country churches in America, and is trying to secure a mailing list of the larger parishes. Will those of our readers who are interested and can help him write him at the above address?

The Enlarged Town & Country Church

• We have doubled the size of TOWN AND COUNTRY CHURCH.

The Committee on Town and Country decided to take this step as a venture of faith. Receipts from subscriptions have thus far been sufficient to provide an eight-page but not a sixteen-page journal. The hope is that there will be many interested cooperators who will say so many good words about TOWN AND COUNTRY CHURCH that we will have enough subscribers, even at the present subscription rate, to carry the venture.

What You Can Do

There is no central promotion fund for TOWN AND COUNTRY CHURCH. It can only be promoted by the interested boards and agencies and by the ministers themselves. Will you, therefore, take responsibilty for:

1. Asking for circulars and sample copies;
2. Announcing the Journal at ministerial association meetings;
3. Seeing that TOWN AND COUNTRY CHURCH is announced at all rural church conferences;
4. Sending us material for publication.